

FLIGHT JACKET

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Election 2004



Miramar Marines weigh issues, head to polls

Story by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Cpl. Va Thao, utilities electrician, Marine Wing Support Squadron 373, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, will not be casting a vote this election.

Disillusioned by each candidate and their respective views on the political issues that are most important to him, he has decided his best course of action is none at all.

Like many Marines, Thao's personal views are not fully supported by any single candidate.

"Their opinions do not back my own. I am equally divided on them and don't want to vote for (any of the major candidates)," said Thao. After frustrating research, his support of any candidate was flimsy at best.

However, some Marines believe citizens like Thao are simply not fully informed on all the issues. Political science major, Cpl. James R.

Moreno, small computer systems specialist, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd MAW, says, "the worst thing you can do is make an uninformed decision."

Moreno has visited each candidate's website, and although his decision was clear to him in early summer, he continues to research the candidates to see if their stands on economic issues change.

"I think more people are going to vote in this election than in past elections. I only hope they do so having done research," said Moreno.

According to Moreno, the average voter is swayed a lot more by a candidate's eloquence than what he is actually saying.

"Many candidates will wink or use hometown charm to win over the voters, but that shouldn't weigh in on your decision. Charm should not win an

election," said the Fresno, Calif., native.

The real issues important to Marine voters vary widely. Moreno is worried about the economy. "I'd sacrifice tax cuts to recover jobs lost and to decrease the deficit," he said.

Cpl. Emmanuel Y. Castillo, MWHS-3, is not as worried about the economy as he is about national security. The San Diego native said, "I wouldn't want anything like (the terrorist attacks)

to happen to my family. I want them to feel safe and secure in their own country."

Other Marines are just as frustrated

on voting as Thao. Cpl. Micah S. Snyder, refueler, MWSS-373, took a political quiz at to find out which candidate most represented his views and found himself evenly divided at 38 percent between two candidates. He added, "I expect the (newly elected) president to follow through with his promises."

Snyder continues his research to identify a candidate worthy of his vote. He knows the candidates have different views on the Iraq war.

"When I was in Iraq it felt like we were making a difference, so I think we were doing the right thing out there. I'll support a candidate (who) wants to finish it the right way and not just get us out as soon as possible," he said.

To find out more about election issues, visit <http://www.fvap.gov>.

For more voting information,
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"The worst thing you can do is make an uninformed decision."

Cpl. James Moreno

Some servicemembers, high-risk beneficiaries to get flu vaccine

Story by Lance Cpl. Daniel J. Redding

MCB Camp Pendleton Combat Correspondent

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. — Servicemembers deploying in support of the war on terrorism and high-risk beneficiaries will receive their flu shots, Department of Defense health officials said this week.

Meanwhile, naval medical officials say they're waiting to determine how much flu vaccine they'll receive and for more specific Defense Department guidance on which patients will get it first, amid news about worldwide shortages that broke last week.

"We expect Camp Pendleton to be affected by the influenza vaccine shortage," said Lt. Cmdr. Scott McKenzie, who heads the Preventive Medicine Department at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton.

Defense Department officials said a plan is being finalized on how to prioritize delivery of the vaccine in light of the shortages.

But, officials said the Defense Department expects to receive enough vaccine to cover high-risk beneficiaries and critical operational forces, an assertion bolstered by a document distributed by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs.

Officials said further guidance on the subject will define critical operational forces, and it will include deployed servicemembers and those slated to deploy soon.

"Once we receive that plan, we will establish our local plan for immunizing both the active duty and beneficiary population," McKenzie said. "The (Department of Defense) supply distribution system will be determining

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Naval medical officials are waiting to determine how much flu vaccine they will receive amid news about worldwide shortages that broke last week. Photo by Lance Cpl. Daniel J. Redding

Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



67°/51°
Today



68°/53°
Saturday



65°/50°
Sunday

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Marine now
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Time running low for presidential elections

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Only days away, the 2004 Presidential Election is creeping up, but it is not too late to cast a vote.

Depending on the state, each voted ballot must arrive by a specific date in order to be tallied for this year's election.

For example, the state of New York must receive all voted ballots by Nov. 9, providing they are post-marked by Nov. 1. However, active duty servicemembers who are registered in New York may turn in their ballots by Nov. 15.

Following different guidelines, Louisiana requires that all of their voted ballots arrive by Nov. 2, but they accept ballots by a fax machine.

Any registered elector can still vote as long as their state's cutoff date has been met. Registered servicemembers and family members who are located overseas can fill out a federal, write-in absentee ballot if they have applied for a regular absentee ballot by Oct. 2, but have not received it.

Unregistered voters residing out of their state of record can send in a Federal Post Card Application to request an absentee ballot. For a faster response, voters can fill out an on-line FPCA form, which most states accept, at <http://fvap.gov>.

To obtain a written form and other information, servicemembers can visit their unit's Voting Assistance Officer.

"I got my absentee ballot from my VAO a few weeks ago," said Sgt. Derrick Bush, aviation electrician, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 314, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. "It's not often that you can make choices like these and anyone who still has a chance to vote should get out and do it."

To ensure the word got out about voting, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area's VAOs have continually encouraged voter awareness in recent months, along with helping servicemembers with the voting process.

According to MCABWA reports, 100 percent of VAOs and individual Marines were contacted about the elections and voting.

Maj. Gen. Timothy Ghormley, director, Headquarters Marine Corps voting officer, sent a Marine Corps wide e-mail about the importance of exercising voting rights and where to go for more information.

Even Marines in Iraq received voting information. "My staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge e-mailed my shop here in Iraq about voting deadlines. We also have VAOs who are willing to help with all of our voting questions," said Lance Cpl. Richard A. Hilario, combat cameraman, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, currently deployed to Iraq. "Just because you are overseas does not mean you cannot vote."

According to George A. San Nicolas, adjutant and assistant Installation Voting Assistance Officer, servicemembers located overseas should follow the same procedures as voters in the states and send in an absentee ballot or federal write-in absentee ballot.

To avoid last minute voting worries, San Nicolas recommends that voters do not procrastinate before the next election and register as soon as they are able.

"You need to be aware of voting opportunities so you can express your views at the polls and make a difference," San Nicolas said. "It is your right as a U.S. citizen to vote and you should take advantage of that right."

For more information and to view different state deadlines and guidelines, visit www.fvap.gov.



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MIRAMARKS

"Why do you think your vote counts?"



LANCE CPL. MITCHELL REYNOLDS
Operations Clerk
MAG-16

"My vote counts because if it comes down to it, my vote could change the outcome of the polls."

CPL. RICK CASSENS
Engineer
MWSS-373

"I think everyone's vote counts. If more people voted there would be less of an argument about who their leader is."



PFC JEROME RAMSEY
Radio Operator
MWCS-38

"My vote is going to count. It's an individuals choice to have their opinion counted when it comes to who the leader of their country will be."



Putting the cap on alcohol abuse

Commentary by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

It's 2 a.m. in the barracks on a weeknight, my walls are shaking and I am stuffing my head between two pillows, pushing down with all my might in an attempt to drown out the incredible racket of Marines who party every night.

I've already called the duty, who I now have on speed dial. Despite getting yelled at every night, the Marines continue to act disorderly.

It's not that they are usually dishonorable or naturally rude. No, it has more to do with the "liquid courage" running through their veins.

In uniform, most Marines are the book-cover representation of professionalism, but when the clock strikes 5 p.m., many Marines are envisioning the ice-cold beer they will pop open the moment they walk in the door.

But what is the cost? Since boot camp, it is drilled into us that alcohol can get us into trouble. In addition to being an expensive habit, the outcome of alcohol

abuse can be loss of pay and reduction in rank, not to mention injury or death. These examples are visible on hanging on walls of various offices and leaders repeat the points regularly and incorporate them into holiday safety briefs until they are blue in the face. But who is listening?

Many Marines would listen to a safety brief addressing alcohol abuse awareness while simultaneously downing a six-pack if they could. They are courageous thrill-seekers by nature, which, mixed with alcohol, can become dangerous.

One such danger crept up on me one late duty night. I was stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, and as a lance corporal, I still had not found my "big girl" voice.

It was a weekday and I was surprised to see drunken Marines stumbling in at all hours of the night. It did not occur to me to send Marines up to check on the most inebriated arrivals or to keep some of them down in the lounge until they were sober enough to

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FLIGHT JACKET

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climb the steps on their own. I looked down on my collar as I signed in drunken sergeants and didn't feel the power of the rank or the duty belt at the time. My insecurity could have cost lives.

When my duty noncommissioned officer relieved me at 3 a.m., I was ready to get some sleep and all thoughts of drunkards slipped peacefully away.

A short time later, I awoke to my alarm and tried to shut it off. I was confused because it was too early for it to go off and though I must have beat it to near dysfunction, the thing would not turn off. After about two minutes of shifting knobs and fumbling with buttons, I was still not fully awake, but it started to occur to me that the sound might not be coming from my alarm clock at all.

The duty NCO was on the phone and he sounded flustered and then I smelled smoke. I clumsily put on my boots and tried to fasten my duty belt under my blouse. I was still not fully awake but the smell of smoke was getting stronger and not one person had evacuated the barracks despite the blaring alarms. It was because drunken Marines like to pull the alarms and most assumed, like I often had, that it was just another false alarm. By the time my boots were finally on, I rushed out to get information from the duty NCO on what was happening, but he shot upstairs into the smoke before I even formulated a coherent sentence.

The flames were on the ceiling by the time the duty NCO got to the two Marines on the second floor. They had fallen asleep in a drunken stupor, left a candle lit and its flames had spread to the rest of the room. The Marines were so drunk they tried to fight the duty NCO as he absorbed their punches and dragged them out of danger.

Marines trickled out of the building at a snail's pace despite our pounding and shouts to get out. By the time the last few Marines evacuated the building, the entire second floor was engulfed in flames.

Firefighters put out the fire but the second floor looked like the inside of a grill under a foot of water the next morning. The barracks suffered serious damage. We later realized that if we had shut the door to the room on fire we could have better contained it.

Although there were many mistakes, we were very lucky no one died, and miraculously, no one was injured.

Marine Corps readiness and mission effectiveness is affected by not only injury or death but inebriation as well.

Under the effects of alcohol you suffer many impairments. I don't give one inch when a Marine claims alcohol was the real culprit, and as a Marine, you shouldn't either. We know our responsibilities as Marines, on and off duty. It is time to start enforcing the rules and regulations we live by, or one day you might have someone else's death hanging on your conscious because you failed to draw the line on a socially accepted state of dysfunction.

11th MEU EOD sweeps Iraqi streets clean

Story by Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

11th MEU Combat Correspondent

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DUKE, Iraq — Nervous? Yes. Wary? Always. Exhausted? Of course.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), has gathered more than 400 Improvised Explosive Devices and more than 40,000 unexploded enemy ordnance items, half of which they destroyed themselves, since the 11th MEU assumed operational control of An Najaf, Iraq, on July 31.

EOD's mission is to detonate or defuse ordnance, inspect munitions, conduct humanitarian demining and bomb detection.

They're a five-man team that, at one point, was supporting three battalions — Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment; and two battalions from the Army's 1st Cavalry Division who joined the Marines during fighting in the city in August.

EOD's support includes accompanying all three battalions on raids. They have participated in several direct action raids with 11th MEU's Force Reconnaissance Platoon, fifteen raids with the Iraqi National Guard and Iraqi Police, and countless patrols. Needless to say, they're tasked out to the extreme.

"We can never really sit down to watch a football game or anything, because we always get a call on that phone," said Gunnery Sgt. Lance N. Patchadlo, assistant team leader, EOD Detachment., pointing to the green and black military telephone that waits in their living quarters to throw them into action.

Being constantly on the move, especially during combat operations in An Najaf, they became well accustomed to lack of sleep.

"Sometimes we'd go two or three days without sleep," said Sgt. Jared A. Scott, EOD technician, about their exploits during August while the MEU battled radical Shia cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and his Muqtada Militia in An Najaf. "Unlike the (infantrymen), we don't have anybody to relieve us."

Despite the exhaustion, they overcame the fatigue and kept their senses sharp. They were forced to improvise in several instances during the thick of combat.

"We didn't have any rest. I don't know how many houses we cleared," said Chief Warrant



Marines from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), and Marines from other units in the MEU stack munitions in the desert outside An Najaf, Iraq, Oct. 20. Photo by Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

Officer Matthew D. Middleton, EOD officer-in-charge. "We were even using a recoilless rifle we found as a battering ram to knock down doors for a while."

Their hard work and steadfast diligence has given their comrades in arms nothing but the highest respect for them.

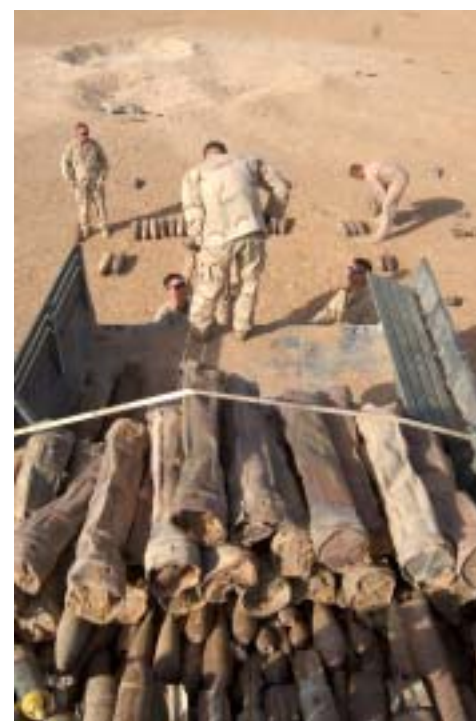
"They're smart, decisive professionals," said Gunnery Sgt. Thomas A. Evans, platoon sergeant, Force Recon Platoon, with whom EOD is always attached during direct action raids. "They're solid players that have their own slice of the pie."

Besides the action, their gear sounds like something out of a science fiction movie. They use everything from robots and metal detectors to thermal imagers, binoculars and sniper's spotting scopes. Much of their gear is some of the most advanced equipment currently available to Marines.

The fact that the word "explosive" is in their job title is something the EOD Marines don't take lightly.

"You're always nervous and you're always wary," Patchadlo said. "You've got to treat everything like it's remotely fired and like the bad guys are always watching."

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Marines from Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), and Marines from other units in the MEU unload munitions from a 7-ton truck Oct. 20 in the desert outside An Najaf, Iraq. Photo by Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

Local Marines obtain U.S. citizenship in Iraq

Story by Staff Sgt. A. C. Mink

3rd MAW Combat Correspondent

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Marines and Soldiers stood alone and in groups, like nervous fathers waiting for their first children. Some paced, some stood talking - anything to pass the time before their long journey came to an end.

They came from as far away as Haiti, Mexico and Brazil, as well as a few who were even returning to their homeland of Iraq.

Two 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Marines and 32 Soldiers swore in as United States citizens in the Al Faw Palace here Oct. 3. The ceremony was the first of its kind held in Iraq, and was the prototype for many to come.

“There are more than 45,000 service-members in the United States military who are pursuing their U.S. citizenship,” said keynote speaker Eduardo Aquirre, director of Citizenship and Immigration Services, U. S. Department of Homeland Security. “Some of (the servicemembers) here have waited years for this moment. I would like to see the rest attain their citizenship as well.”

The ceremony, held in the rotunda of the palace, was witnessed by hundreds who lined the walls on each of its three levels, including servicemembers from around the world and some of the top American officers in Iraq.

“I am just glad to finally be here,” said Sgt. Demetrios Kontizas, administrative chief, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, who was told just a few weeks prior to the ceremony that his citizenship paperwork wasn’t ready and he wouldn’t be able to participate in the ceremony.

Kontizas, a Rio de Janeiro, Brazil native, grew up in New York City and first applied for U.S. citizenship several years ago, but because he was in the Marine Corps, his paperwork couldn’t keep pace with his change of duty assignments. He reapplied in San Diego, but missed an appointment with the Naturalization Office when he received orders to deploy to Iraq

in February.

“I didn’t think it was going to happen,” said Kontizas, whose dream of becoming a Marine officer was hindered due to a requirement of American citizenship. “I felt betrayed. It had been more than two years, and now I was being (denied) with no way to fix it.”

“This is the type of issue that occurs with applications from military members,” said Leigh Colitre, immigration officer, Athens District Office, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. “We lose them for years, and only find them again when they reapply for citizenship. It is hoped that the (proposed) amendment will alleviate this type of issue and expedite the process for military members.”

Motivated by the Marine and unwilling to take no for an answer, members of Kontizas’ command and I MEF representatives looked into the issue. The once arrested process stirred into motion.

“The first thing I will do when I get back to Al Asad, (Iraq), is complete my officer’s package,” Kontizas said.

Unfortunately, more than half a dozen I MEF Marines, and dozens of Soldiers on the list, did not take part in the ceremony due to operational commitments, redeployment out of country and other issues.

However, according to Virginia T. Palomares, immigration officer, Rome District Office, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Oct. 3 ceremony was only the beginning.

Department of Citizenship and Immigration Services personnel plan to repeat this process as often as possible, in essence, taking the process to the servicemembers who are serving the country.

The lion’s share of the arduous paperwork process for the candidates was completed prior to their trip to Baghdad.

“Specific procedures, including background checks, were completed to ensure that we (were) connecting the correct benefit to (the) correct person,” said Palomares. “We don’t want anyone to show up just to find out they were ineligible.”

Over the days preceding the ceremony,



Eduardo Aquirre (center), director of Citizenship and Immigration Services, U. S. Department of Homeland Security, congratulates 24-year-old Sgt. Demetrios Kontizas, during the first U.S. citizenship ceremony ever conducted at Al Faw Palace, Baghdad, Iraq, Oct. 3. Kontizas, the administrative chief for Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, is one of two 1st Marine Expeditionary Force Marines and 32 Soldiers who took the oath of citizenship during the ceremony. Photo by Staff Sgt. A.C. Mink

the candidates arrived alone and in groups to complete the interview process and take their citizenship test.

“I was really nervous,” said Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Cardale Harrison, a personnel chief with the 308th Transportation Company, who grew up in Lincoln, Neb., after coming to America from Thailand.

However, as each candidate completed the process and took their citizenship test, there was a marked change in their demeanor.

“The officers kept the setting relaxed, but professional, so it was easier than I thought it would be,” said Harrison, who didn’t learn he wasn’t an American citizen until a few years ago.

Following several days of practice, the ceremony may have at first seemed anticlimactic.

Differing from many citizenship ceremonies in America, there was no one draped in the U. S. flag. No crying or outward displays drew attention to individuals.

In fact, the rotunda was absolutely silent for a few seconds following the final words of the oath, uttered in one voice by the candidates.

However, as applause filled the palace that was once the vacation home of a dictator, as one, the Marines and Soldiers

stood taller and their chests swelled with pride. One could even spy smiles sneaking onto the serious faces.

“I’ve never seen anything like it,” said Australian Army Cpl. Gavin Walker, a coalition member who made friends with several of the candidates.

“I feel (kind of) weird,” said Lance Cpl. Jose M. Fonseca, Bravo Co., 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division, whose tour in Iraq ends soon. “In a matter of days I’ll go back to the states, and I’ll be a citizen.”

Fonseca, whose family immigrated to America in 1983 when he was a toddler, says he grew up in San Diego with “all the Marines and Sailors,” so joining the Marine Corps was “just in the cards.”

As the rotunda emptied following the ceremony, one Soldier, formerly of Iraq, looked around the room. The gravity of the moment took on a whole new meaning when, clutching his tiny American flag, he turned to another Soldier and said, “I never thought I would be standing here to become an American.”

Note: The name of the soldier who came from Iraq has been kept out of the story in the interest of security. Information for military members seeking U.S. citizenship is available online at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/services/natz/militarybrochurev7.htm>.

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Many of these Marines think some of the insurgents particularly have it out for EOD personnel.

"Sometimes, EOD techs are baited in and targeted by insurgents," Patchadlo said. "They do that all the time with IEDs."

That's not even mentioning the morbid lengths insurgents go to make IEDs. These makeshift explosives are used to attack convoys and innocent civilians while the insurgents can be at a safe distance and remotely detonate the device.

They commonly use the corpses of people, dogs, goats, cattle and donkeys in which to hide the weapons. There were probably a lot more IEDs other than the 400 safely disarmed, Patchadlo claims.

"Marines can't always stop and call in that an IED went off when they're in the middle of combat," Patchadlo said.

Middleton attributes much of their team's success to learning the enemy's tactics, techniques and procedures beforehand.

"We had two weeks to practice, where we got to learn how they were setting up," he said.

But for now, they're mostly busy with destroying weapons left over by the Muqtada Militia. They've taken care of nearly 3,000 various weapons so far.

"We've been working closely with local Iraqi Police to find any explosive hazards left by the militia," Patchadlo said. "People will find little things the (insurgents) hid, then they get killed or captured and it's left there."

To the insurgents' likely dismay, none of their found ordnance or IEDs found ever exploded in the streets of Najaf. Of the hundreds of munitions and IEDs found, EOD moved all of them outside city limits to be safely destroyed.

"No (unexploded ordnance) or IEDs were blown up by us in the city (so that we could) lessen the collateral damage they might do," Middleton said.

Even though there's much more to be done, they're optimistic that they have made this area safer.

"There's more out there than we've taken care of. All we can do is focus on what we have done and hope we've made a difference," Middleton concluded.



Sgt. Jared A. Scott, Explosive Ordnance Disposal technician, EOD Detachment, 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), counts the munitions to be exploded in the desert outside An Najaf, Iraq, Oct. 20. EOD keeps a strict count of all the munitions they capture and destroy. Photo by Cpl. Matthew S. Richards

CAB develops combat effectiveness at Fuji

Five-week combined arms operation integrates various weapons, maneuvers for 3rd MarDiv

Story by Lance Cpl. Joel Abshier

MCB Camp Butler Combat Correspondent

CAMP FUJI, Japan — More than 500 Marines and Sailors from Okinawa, Japan, and Camp Lejeune, N.C., arrived here Oct. 3 to conduct Fuji Combined Arms Operation 05-1.

The five-week exercise is giving Marines with Combat Assault Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, and Battery R, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd MarDiv, the chance to build combat effectiveness in a challenging and different environment, according to 1st Lt. Mark D. Nicholson, adjutant, CAB.

"The combined arms operation is meant to integrate various weapons and maneuvers to make the units more combat effective," Nicholson said.

According to Lance Cpl. Sally J. Saalman, motor vehicle operator, CAB, these maneuvers have been tough in the wet terrain.

"The biggest challenge for me (is) the climate change," Saalman said. "It (has been) a challenge driving to all the training areas safely on these (wet) roads."

According to Lt. Col. David L. Coggins, commanding officer, CAB, the exercise is broken down into five phases: deployment preparation, platoon training, company training, battalion training and redeployment.

"We are replicating our assigned tasks from 3rd Marine Division as a separate maneuver battalion to deploy, fight, win and redeploy," Coggins said. "(Combat Assault Battalion) is the Marine Corps' only permanent, forward-deployed combined arms battalion, and when augmented with other capabilities, we provide 3rd Marine Division and 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force with a mechanized task force."

The Marines are using assault amphibian vehicles, light armored vehicles, com-



Marines prepare field-expedient claymore mines at a demolition range at Camp Fuji, Japan, Oct. 6. They are among more than 500 Marines and Sailors with Combat Assault Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, and Battery R, 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, 3rd MarDiv, participating in Fuji Combined Arms Operation 05-1. Photo by Lance Cpl. Adaecus Brooks

bat excavators, nuclear/biological/chemical detection vehicles, together with artillery cannons and various individual and crew-served infantry weapons, to accomplish their mission, said Coggins.

According to Lance Cpl. Travis G. Hill, heavy equipment operator, CAB, this operation gives CAB Marines a better understanding of what they will experience in a real-world conflict.

"This exercise (has helped) me understand the elements of combat," said Hill, a Las Vegas native. "I am becoming more efficient as a Marine because I know what my (military occupation) does during combat situations."

Combat Assault Battalion spent six months preparing for Fuji Combined Arms Operation 05-1, and aggressive training is making this a mission rehearsal for any potential real-world deployment, Coggins explained.

Former Marine puts ‘Corps’ in corpsman

Story by Cpl. Randy Bernard

1st MarDiv Combat Correspondent

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HIT, Iraq — Navy corpsmen are the first responders to trauma victims in the field, often saving the lives of their Marine partners.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Dwayne McBryde, the platoon corpsman for scout sniper platoon, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 7, is more than just a medical aide for his sniper teammates. He spent 10 years as a machine-gunner for the Marine Corps, and then eight years as a civilian paramedic before enlisting in the Navy.

McBryde, 39, a native of The Woodlands, Texas, was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps in 1994 as a sergeant, having served most of his time aboard ship.

After his discharge, McBryde went to work for The Woodlands Fire Department. McBryde went from working as a Marine Corps machine-gunner stationed out of Camp Pendleton, to a paramedic, gaining several years of experience in the streets helping trauma victims and saving lives.

Seeing the tragedy of September 11, McBryde decided to enter the military again.

“I was going back into the military to serve my country one way or another,” said McBryde. “I came back into the military one month after 9/11. I felt it was my responsibility.”

While he was completing his entrance tests for the Marine Corps reserves, he was approached by a chief petty officer who

was conducting physicals at the Military Entrance Processing Station.

“He had heard that I was a paramedic and suggested the idea of becoming a corpsman for the Marines,” said McBryde. “I had to think about it for a

week before I was able to make my decision.

“At the time I had gained lots of experience as a paramedic. It was something I was good at. I thought I could contribute more (by) saving Marines’ lives as a corpsman than (by) being a machine-gunner.”

McBryde enlisted into the Navy as a petty officer second class. He was able to attain the rank due to his time in the Marine Corps and his knowledge of the

“I was a team leader, squad leader, and even a platoon sergeant. It helped me to better operate with the Marines as a corpsman.”

**Petty Officer 2nd Class Dwayne McBryde
Corpsman, 1/23**



Petty Officer 2nd Class Dwayne McBryde, corpsman for scout sniper platoon, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 7, 1st Marine Division, sights in with an M16A4 rifle. Prior to joining the Navy as a corpsman, McBryde served in the Marine Corps for 10 years as a machine-gunner. McBryde, 39, a native of The Woodlands Texas, also spent eight years as a paramedic, gaining experience in life-saving before he enlisted into the Navy. *Photo by Cpl. Randy Bernard*

medical field. He then attended field medical school at Camp Pendleton, Calif., where he graduated as the platoon commander of his class.

“I attribute my time in the Marine Corps (to) the leadership skills to get that position in my class,” said McBryde. “I also attribute my time as an infantryman (to) making me a better corpsman. (In the Marine Corps) I was a team leader, squad leader, and even a platoon sergeant. It helped me to better operate with the Marines as a corpsman.”

He spent two and half years in the Navy but still feels more like a Marine than a corpsman.

“I am treated more like a Marine with medical skills, and they respect me more for my time in the Marine Corps,” said McBryde.

McBryde spent six months with Company A, 1/23, RCT-7, where his reputation as a knowledgeable corpsman led to his reassignment to the scout sniper platoon. He has been with the snipers ever since.

“I have attended all of their training to ensure I know how to do all of the things that they do, like spotting, range estimation and marksmanship skills, so that I could blend in with them,” he said.

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Standing guard at a checkpoint, reserve Marines from Battery P, 5th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, based in Spokane, Wash., remain watchful during an external patrol around the perimeter of Al Asad, Iraq, Oct. 6. *Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri*

Reservists keep Al Asad perimeter safe

Story by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri

3rd MAW Combat Correspondent

Driving through miles of seemingly endless desert, many hours have passed and exhaustion has begun to set in.

At one of the largest military installations in Iraq, patrolling around Al Asad's perimeter is no easy task, yet

the Marines safeguarding its boundaries remain constantly watchful and take their job seriously.

In a combined effort, reservists from Battery P, 5th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, based in Spokane, Wash., have joined 4th Low-Altitude Air Defense Battalion, serving with Security Battalion, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, to accomplish the mission of protecting Al Asad.

Under a constant threat from anti-Iraqi forces, Marines here conduct non-stop patrols that cover a wide area in every direction around the base's outskirts.

"Doing a patrol around base keeps a buffer between us and the enemy," said Staff Sgt. Leon C. Pilgrim, platoon sergeant, Company B, 4th LAAD Bn. "The further we can keep them from the base, the safer we are."

Performing patrols day and night, each Marine on the patrol is required to be extremely observant of their surroundings.

"The most important thing I tell my Marines before each patrol is to stay alert," said Pilgrim. "You never know what's going on out there, so you have to be prepared for anything."

Marines conducting vehicle patrols or standing guard duty often have to combat the unseen adversary of complacency, caused by the monotony occasionally encountered during missions.

"Not seeing anything out there is almost worse than seeing something," said Pilgrim. "You can sometimes catch yourself becoming complacent, but you need to snap out of it. Just because there wasn't anything out there today doesn't mean there won't be tomorrow."

A policeman in Atlanta during peacetime, Pilgrim has had a lot of experience in dealing with security.

"My job as a police officer translates to my security duties out here," said the 33-year-old. "When I have to conduct a search it comes like second nature."

A single patrol can last for hours, so the day before the patrol the Marines involved receive a full brief of the next day's events.

"Everyone shows up for the brief because it's so important," said Cpl. Jeremy C. Greenfield, forward observer, Battery P. "We get the who, what, where and why of the mission."

Normally functioning as an artillery unit, the reservists from Company P didn't quite expect to be conducting patrol missions here.

"When I first did a patrol I was a little nervous be-

See PERIMETER, page 9

Story by Sgt. Cecilia Sequeira

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Marines and families have already begun their ghoulish celebrations, proving that Halloween is no longer just a children’s festivity.

Single servicemembers celebrated with free food, music, and chilling events and giveaways at the Single Marine Program Halloween Barracks Bash Wednesday night.

During Halloween Happenings at the station theater, kids got free scares and laughs during Ronald McDonald’s afternoon magic show, followed by the movie, “The Haunted Mansion.” Every child, age 2 to 12, also scored a free soda and popcorn for the movie and a “goodie bag” on their way out of the theater.

Don’t keep your hopes up for a haunted house on the station; you’ll have to drive a little further for that. “We used to do a haunted house but with the (Miramar) Air Show two weeks prior (to Halloween), it just becomes impossible, so we created Halloween Happenings instead,” said Denise E. Fairbanks, special events manager, Marine Corps Community Services, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

However, there are plenty of upcoming events available outside the station for adults and children to celebrate the scariest night of the year.

For the adult scene, San Diego’s Gaslamp District promises to have many costumed partygoers haunting the streets of California’s finest city. “I’ll probably get a fake Afro (wig) and wear an old, frilly 70s suit downtown,” said Staff Sgt. Keni L. Brooks, sector manager, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

If costumed bar hopping does not sound entertaining, there are plenty of opportunities for wholesome Halloween enjoyment.

Six Flags Magic Mountain in Valencia, Calif.,

promises to deliver thrills, shrills and chills for the whole family after converting their theme park into a scream park. The park offers a new maze this year with six maze-roaming zombies, spooky shows, and extreme rides in the dark.

For more nearby zombies and ghouls, there are many haunted trails and houses to choose from in San Diego, each with a different spooking touch.

In the Haunted Hotel, horror movies become reality, the Blood Bayou offers southern horrors with a swampy twist and the Haunted Trail at Balboa Park opens the pages of “Grimm’s Fairy Tales,” only with a terrifying outdoor twist. Due to the intense fear factor, these

Halloween safety tips

- ✦Apply face paint or cosmetics directly to the face. It is safer than masks, which can obstruct a child’s vision.
- ✦If a mask is worn, cut the eyeholes large enough to allow full vision and be certain the mask fits securely.
- ✦Set a time for your child to return home.
- ✦Know the route your child will be taking.
- ✦Children should be in groups of two or more.
- ✦Examine candy wrappers for tiny holes or tears before allowing your child to eat.
- ✦Do not allow your child to eat unwrapped candy.
- ✦Carry flashlights.
- ✦Walk on sidewalks. Do not walk on streets or cut across yards.
- ✦Make costumes short enough to avoid tripping.
- ✦Do not allow children to carry swords or other props that are not soft and flexible.
- ✦Secure hats so they do not slip over children’s eyes.
- ✦Decorate or trim costumes with reflective tape.
- ✦Only visit homes that have an outside light on.

locations are not recommended for young children. For information on all three of these scream fests, visit .

Birch Aquarium at Scripps has become haunted for a night full of fun and fright. This family-friendly Halloween event features crafts, spooky science exhibits including creatures that glow, a ghost forest, a slime lab, pirate stories and trick-or-treating.

Mira Mesa’s Monster Manor offers day and night haunting and for children 12 and under, the manor features Light Fright. For times or additional information, visit .

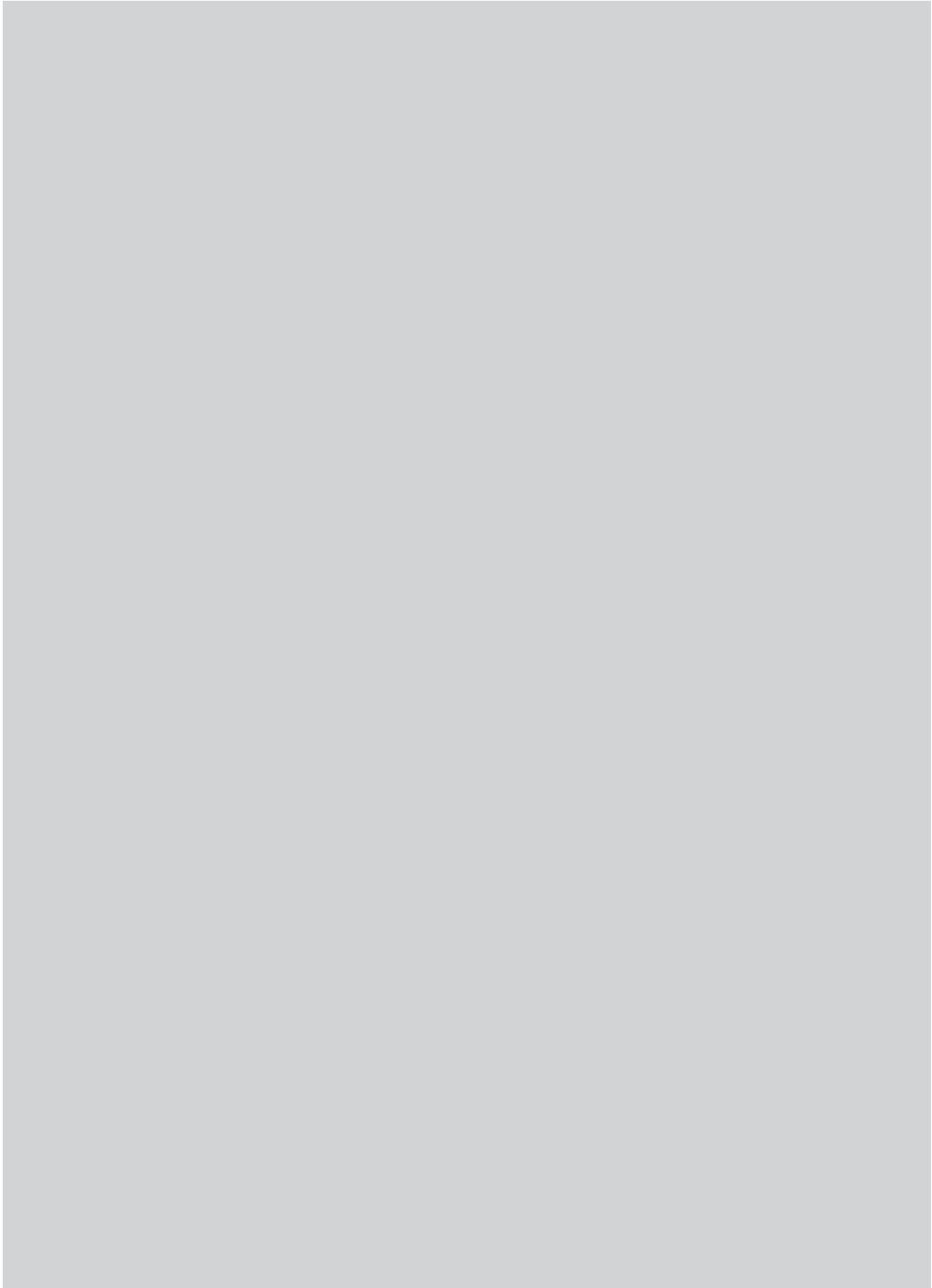
If staged horror seems unrealistic, the Ghosts and Gravestones Tour offers a visit to the Whaley House, believed to be one of the most haunted houses in America. If that isn’t enough, the tour also walks through one of the oldest cemeteries in San Diego.

Classic trick-or-treating rounds out every Halloween adventure for children.

Monica L. McIntosh, a military spouse, has a creative way of making sure her two young sons don’t eat tainted Halloween candy each year. “I buy a bunch of different candy. We still get to trick-or-treat. I’ll check out (their candy) when they get home and give them a piece that is in a wrapper that can’t be opened and closed. I won’t give them something like a tootsie roll, which can be opened and closed and I take out anything homemade, like cookies and popcorn,” she said.

In addition to being safety conscious, McIntosh is well prepared to make sure her sons’ Halloween experience is not compromised. “When they go to bed I switch it out with candy that I have bought,” she said.

Foreign candy isn’t the only danger. Halloween does present other hazards. Falls are the leading cause of accidents on Halloween, so be careful and most of all, use common sense. Steps, uneven pavement and other obstacles can cause falls in the dark. Flammable and cumbersome costumes, wigs and masks are dangerous. Pedestrians should also avoid walking near traffic during hours of darkness.





Petty Officer 2nd Class Dwayne McBryde (right), the corpsman for scout sniper platoon, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 7, 1st Marine Division, uses a spotting scope to identify targets down range for his sniper teammates. McBryde, a 39-year-old native of The Woodlands, Texas, has attended every training session with the snipers in his platoon for the past two years. Photo by Cpl. Randy Bernard

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McBryde uses his knowledge and connection with Marines to teach them life-saving skills.

“I have trained them medically. They are all combat trauma qualified and have received advanced first aid training,” said McBryde.

The team of scout snipers is grateful to have a corpsman with McBryde’s vast knowledge and experience as part of the team.

Because of his prior enlistment as a Marine and his civilian career as a paramedic, he has more experience than

most active duty corpsmen, according to Gunnery Sgt. Timothy J. Dowd, platoon commander for the scout snipers.

Having him around is very reassuring.

Dowd, 39, a native of Allen, Texas, trusts that his corpsman will get the job done.

“He is a corpsman first, and I am sure he could save lives,” said Dowd. “As a former Marine, not only can he save lives, but he can take lives.”

For now, saving lives is the focus of McBryde’s career, overseas and at home.

“I plan on doing my time over here, and then heading back to the firehouse,” said McBryde.



The Celts believed that spirits came out to visit the living on 'All Hallows Eve,' now referred to as Halloween. To protect themselves from evil spirits, the Celts performed rituals that have evolved into trick-or-treating, pumpkin carving and costume parties. *Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones*

Potatoes, spirits, Celts: the history of Halloween

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Many people celebrate Halloween with costume parties, trick-or-treating and ghost stories.

However, many Halloween traditions currently celebrated can be traced back more than 2,000 years to Ireland, where, according to several historians, the haunting holiday first began.

The Celts, who occupied parts of Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France, celebrated the new year Nov. 1, designated by the Catholic Church as "All Hallows Day" or "All Saints Day" to honor the saints.

Celtic priests, otherwise known as Druids, believed the start of the Celtic New Year symbolized the end of summer and the arrival of the new cycle of life.

Before Christianity spread the Celts celebrated "All Hallows Eve," later referred to as Halloween or Samhain, on the last day of the year, when the Celts believed the dead came to visit the living on earth.

Throughout the night, Druids assembled sacred bonfires while the Celts gathered around in various costumes, usually made out of animal heads and skins, to sacrifice crops and animals.

The Celts would also dance around and predict each other's fortunes during the night and, according to some historians, worship Samhain, the Lord of the Dead, also known as the Lord of Darkness.

Some historians believe that Samhain was really a lord who held the sun god captive during the winter months. Other historians hypothesized that Samhain is the actual celebration of "All Saints Day" and the start of the Celtic New Year.

After the celebration, the Celts re-lit their fires to safeguard themselves

during the chilly Celtic winter.

Years later, Pope Boniface IV tried to replace the Celt's celebrations with friendlier activities, that many historians believe was an effort to make Halloween a church and family-friendly holiday.

Today people still celebrate many traditions that came from the Celts and other cultures.

According to some historians, trick-or-treating originated with the Druids, who believed that the dead returned to be entertained on Halloween. Everyone who gave treats was believed to prosper, while those who neglected to give had tricks played on them.

Other historians believe that trick-or-treating started in England, when the poor begged for food on "All Soul's Day" Nov. 2. Beggars who prayed for the dead were believed to receive treats, while children were also handed out treats to prevent mischief.

Pumpkin carving began in Ireland, according to historians. Celts used turnips, rutabagas and potatoes in place of pumpkins and according to legend, a vicious man named Jack went to hell, where he walked around with a piece of burning coal that he received from the devil and had put it in a turnip. He became known as "Jack of the Lantern" or "Jack-o'-lantern."

The Celts positioned jack-o'-lanterns outside to scare Jack and other evil spirits away on Halloween.

Today, costume parties are also a common tradition for Halloween enthusiasts, which originate back to the Celts who dressed up in costume as they gave offerings at fires.

Each culture celebrates Halloween differently. However the spooky holiday gives friends and family a chance to celebrate together, sometimes with an unannounced spirit or two included in the plans.

PERIMETER continued from page 7

cause I didn't know what to expect," said 21-year-old Greenfield. "Now I'm more familiar with what we're doing, and when I go out there, I'm never worried because we've all had the proper training."

Building and maintaining trust between the Marines in a unit has always been an important part of every mission, and patrols are no exception.

"When I'm out there, I'm confident in myself and the Marines next to me,"

said Greenfield. "As long as you relax and think about what you're doing, you'll be fine."

With such a large responsibility on their shoulders, it is imperative the Marines of Battery P maintain a vigilant and upbeat mindset.

"Marines can easily get stressed out here doing this job," said Lance Cpl. Haden E. Barkley, field artillery cannoneer, Battery P.

"The biggest challenge is staying focused and positive," added the 21-year-old, fulltime student at Whitworth College in Spokane, Wash.



Cpl. Jerry T. Zuetrong, field artillery cannoneer, Battery P, 5th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, surveys a segment of the Iraqi desert through the scope of his M-16 assault rifle during an external patrol around the perimeter of Al Asad, Iraq, Oct. 6. *Photo by Cpl. Joel A. Chaverri*

Miramar celebrates Red Ribbon Week

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The body of Enrique Camarena was found Feb. 7, 1985, after he had been brutally murdered by drug lords. The former Marine was working undercover in Mexico for the Drug Enforcement Administration.

After his death, Camarena's family and friends wore red ribbons to honor their lost hero. Word soon spread about Camarena's gallant efforts and groups set up a Red Ribbon Campaign to raise America's awareness of the harmful effects of drug and alcohol abuse.

In 1988, Congress adopted an eight-day national anti-drug campaign called Red Ribbon Week.

Today, millions of Americans are wearing the red satin ribbon Oct. 23-29 to symbolize their stand against drug and alcohol abuse.

Marine Corps Community Services Drug Demand Reduction coordinators, the Substance Abuse Control Center, Single Marine Program and Health Promotion department have worked together during Red Ribbon week to educate servicemembers and the community about the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol.

"Red Ribbon Week gives us a specific time frame to get the word out on drugs," said Gunnery Sgt. Sam W. Price, drug and alcohol counseling director, MCCS, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar. "The week gives us a chance to go out and consciously make an effort to raise people's awareness about drugs."

A theater presentation by Col. Roy A. Arnold, Assistant Wing Commander, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, was conducted on base Tuesday to get the anti-drug message out. In addition, The SMP and HP departments teamed up to sponsor the 5K Drug Free Run and Walk Thursday for individuals and squadrons.

Servicemembers and civilian employees from the air station also took the time to talk to local elementary schools and the Youth Center here, to instill healthy, drug-free values in children.

"The kids are so fascinated with Marines. We are role models for them," said Cpl. Tashna S. Hicks, volunteer speaker at the events and training noncommissioned officer-in-charge, utilities, Marine Wing Support Squadron 373, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. "They really enjoy hearing from us and if we can get a positive message out to the kids, we can make a big difference."

According to Dr. Nate Lowe, DDR coordinator, people relate well to what Marines say because Marines are known for leading by example.

However, there are still some Marines who end up abusing alcohol and drugs.

The best thing you can do for someone who is abusing drugs or alcohol is to listen to them, explained Hicks.

"If you keep pressuring a person to quit, they will not open up to you," Hicks said. "A lot of people who resort to drugs and alcohol have underlying problems that they need to address. It's important to let them know that you are there for them and will listen. You don't need alcohol to drown your sorrows."

If a Marine does have a problem, they can go to their unit's Substance Abuse Control Officer for a referral to the Substance Abuse Control Center.

According to Price, Marines with no documented alcohol-related incidents who go to their unit's SACO on a self-referral will have no disciplinary action taken against them.

Marines with drug-related problems risk administrative separation from the service for using illegal drugs, but will still receive treatment.

"It is better to get help before it is too late," Price said. "If you think you might have a problem, it never hurts to ask and we will never turn anyone away at the counseling center."

To find out more information on drug and alcohol abuse and treatment, contact the SACC at 577-1297 or the DDRP at 577-6585.

VACCINE

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how much vaccine each military base receives based on their population at risk. The vaccine is expected to be received in multiple shipments over the next several weeks."

The United States will receive roughly half of its expected doses of flu vaccine due to the Oct. 5 shutdown of Chiron Corporation's vaccine manufacturing factory in England, according to the Associated Press.

British health officials ordered the suspension amid concerns about Chiron's manufacturing process, according to news reports.

Federal officials initially expected 100 million doses for distribution in the United States.

As of late last week, they expected only 54 million doses from the world's other major manufacturer, Aventis, according to a New York Times report.

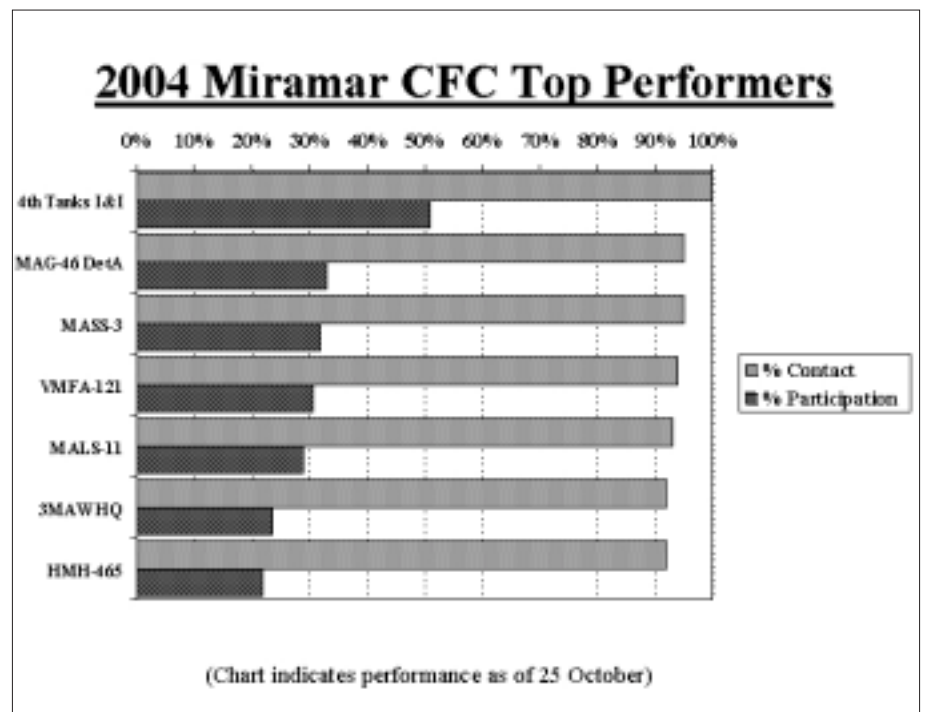
The U.S. shortfall resulted in a deficit at the Defense Department and its military health outlets, including local military hospitals.

By October 20, the Defense Department had revised its count of doses needed from 2.2 million to 1.7 million.

The department has arranged to receive 1.3 million doses of vaccine from Aventis, and is negotiating with Aventis to receive more and expects to vaccinate everyone in its target group, including all high-risk beneficiaries who typically receive their care at Defense Department facilities, officials said.

Department of Defense officials expressed confidence they would be able to meet the immunization requirements for critically operational forces and high-risk patients.

COMBIND FEDERAL CAMPAIGN



Top Performers

Who's who in the CFC donation race?

The above chart displays the current top seven participating units aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in the Combined Federal Campaign as of Monday.

The Combined Federal Campaign is an outlet for servicemembers and federally-employed civilians to donate

money to a wide array of charities and non-profit organizations.

For more information on the Combined Federal Campaign or to donate money to an organization, see your unit's Combined Federal Campaign coordinator, or visit thir official Web site at <http://www.opm.gov/cfc>.

Miramar Movies

The Station Auditorium is located in building 2242, and will be featuring the following movies free of charge. Outside food and drinks are not permitted. For more information, contact 577-4143 or log on to www.mccsmiramar.com.

Today:
4:30 p.m. The Cookout (PG-13)
6:30 p.m. Resident Evil: Apocalypse (R)
8:30 p.m. Hero (PG-13)

Saturday:
6:30 p.m. Wicker Park (PG-13)
8:30 p.m. Cellular (PG-13)

Sunday:
1 p.m. The Cookout (PG-13)
6:30 p.m. Vanity Fair (PG-13)

Wednesday:
6:30 p.m. Mr. 3000 (PG-13)

Thursday:
2 p.m. Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow (PG)
6:30 p.m. Cellular (PG-13)

Presentations and time subject to change.

Paintball Persecution

All active duty servicemembers are invited to participate in the 2004 Paintball Persecution tournament Nov. 20 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Mr. Paintball in Escondido. Teams are limited to five players and one alternate. Teams may have one civilian. Entry is \$35 if you have your own gear, \$45 if you don't. For more information, call 577-6283.

Religious Services

The Chaplain's Office is located in building 5632 and coordinates regularly-scheduled worship services. For the location and meeting schedules of religious activities, contact the Chaplain's Office at 577-1333.

Sunday:
9:30 a.m. Protestant worship service
11 a.m. Roman Catholic Eucharist
Wednesday:
7 p.m. Baptist service
Monday-Friday:
11:30 a.m. Roman Catholic daily mass
Jewish:
7 p.m. First Friday of the month MCRD
7:30 p.m. Last Friday at Edson Range Chapel

Super Bowl raffle

Until Dec. 5, any time you visit a Marine Corps Community Services club or restaurant, you will be eligible to enter a raffle for a chance to win a four-day, three-night all-expense paid trip for two to Jacksonville, Fla., to attend Super Bowl XXXIX. Entry forms can be picked up at the officer, staff noncommissioned officer, and enlisted clubs.

Clock, battery change

Don't forget to turn your clock back one hour at 2 a.m. Sunday for the end of daylight-saving time. As you change your clock, remember to change the battery in your smoke alarm.

Post and relief

Sgt. Maj. Louis M. Espinal will be relieved by Sgt. Maj. Melvin O. Chesnut as Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38 sergeant major in a post and relief ceremony today at 10 a.m. at Mills Park. Sgt. Maj. Chestnut joins the squadron from Marine Tactical Air Command Squadron 38, and Sgt. Maj. Espinal will assume duty at Marine Air Control Group 38.

USO events

The USO will hold a free Navy Band Southwest concert Dec. 5 at 2 p.m. at the San Diego Civic Theater and the annual Toys for Tots 8K and 5K Run/Walk at MCAS Miramar Dec. 11. Awards will be given. For more information, call (619) 235-6503.

Impounded Vehicles

The following vehicles have been impounded and need to be claimed by the owners. Towing fees average \$113, storage fees \$28 daily. For more information contact the Provost Marshal's Office at 577-1461.

Vehicle:	License:	Vehicle:	License:
1998 Ford F-150	CA/5V43578	UNK Honda Prelude	CA/4HVR985
2002 Suzuki GSX-R600	CA/16Y3829	UNK Mitsubishi 2dr	CA/3SWS361
1994 Pontiac Grand Prix	TN/MLP767	UNK VW Fox	CA/3FYS766
UNK Chevy Van	AK/EGX921	UNK VW Van	CA/2RQM558
UNK VW Jetta	CA/2JUR318	2004 Ford Explorer	CA/4NJC754
UNK Isuzu Rodeo	AL/11A413N	1986 Toyota Cressida	CA/4GAR950

